

With its electric motor, Linear Labs wants to turn Dallas-Fort Worth into 'Detroit of electrification'

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Fort Worth-based Linear Labs wants to put its electric motors into everything from scooters to air conditioners—and it wants to make them

in North Texas.

The startup opened a new lab and headquarters earlier this year, and it has signed deals with eight companies. It plans to hire more engineers and build a facility to test different approaches to manufacturing next year.

With [electric cars](#) and other kinds of electrification, steps toward a better battery often steal the spotlight. Linear Labs is focused on another piece of the puzzle: developing a less expensive, more powerful electric motor.

Linear Lab's CEO and co-founder Brad Hunstable said the [company's](#) motor could increase the range of electric-powered modes of transportation, such as e-bikes. It could also lower their cost, so more customers consider buying electric-powered cars, industrial equipment and more.

He said the motor is a timely step toward green energy. "Last time I checked, the world isn't getting any colder," he said.

He said he wants Linear Labs to help turn Dallas-Fort Worth into a major market for electrification. He said the region already has companies that could develop and benefit from electric-powered innovation, such as defense contractors, logistics companies and energy experts.

North Texas is also home to major data centers that need to be air conditioned. He pointed to the delivery robots that FedEx Office has tested in the Dallas suburbs and the electric-powered urban air taxi that Fort Worth-based helicopter manufacturer Bell plans to develop for Uber.

"Dallas-Fort Worth has the opportunity to be the Detroit of

electrification," he said.

Linear Labs is the latest venture for Brad Hunstable, co-founder and former CEO of video streaming company Ustream. The Granbury native spent years flying back and forth to San Francisco to work at Ustream until it was acquired by IBM in 2016 in a deal valued at \$130 million. Now he and his father, Fred Hunstable, are building a business together in Texas.

The company began as a father-son project between Brad, who is 41, and Fred Hunstable, 66. Fred Hunstable, who has a background in electrical engineering and [nuclear power](#), discovered a new way to design an electric motor. They hired researchers to test their prototypes. According to the tests, the motors had 10% to 20% more range than other motors on the market.

They turned the side project into a company in 2013, and Fred Hunstable became the company's chief technology officer.

For companies, a smaller and more efficient motor could add up to significant savings. For customers, it could lead to a [lower price](#) or a better experience.

For example, the motors could be used in the electric scooters that people rent through an app in downtown Dallas or other cities. With the company's motor, the rental scooters would have more power for uphill and acceleration—and they'd spend less of the day drained of energy and abandoned on a street corner, Brad Hunstable said.

The company—initially funded by Brad Hunstable—has raised about \$6 million in venture funding. Its investors include Science Inc., a Los Angeles area venture firm; Kindred Ventures, a San Francisco venture firm; and former Shark Tank judge Chris Sacca and his wife, Crystal

Sacca.

Linear Labs has grown to 25 full-time employees, including some who have worked for Tesla and General Motors. The company moved to an 11,000-square-foot lab and office space in Fort Worth in March. It is ramping up production for its first eight clients by early next year, but declined to name the companies because of nondisclosure agreements.

Linear Labs initially will focus on making motors for electric scooters and residential [air conditioners](#), since the motors are similar in size, easier to make and have a large market. It will use a network of manufacturing facilities to make the motors initially, Brad Hunstable said.

Next year, Brad Hunstable said, Linear Labs will take steps to bring its manufacturing closer to home. He wants to break ground on a facility in Dallas-Fort Worth where Linear Labs can test different ways to make the motors more quickly and cheaply with robots. He plans to expand the company to 100 employees that range from robot designers to software engineers by the end of 2020.

In the next three years, he said, he wants the motor to be in an electric vehicle. He said Linear Labs will also look for new ways to use motors as data-collecting tools so they can flag a problem or become more efficient with the push of a software update.

"Motors are almost going to become sensors for us," he said.

He said he wants the motor—the Hunstable Electric Turbine, or HET [motor](#)—to become a respected brand for parts, with name recognition akin to Intel's chips, Gore-Tex's waterproof fabric or Dolby's audio technology.

"I literally see a day where it says "HET-powered' on every car, on the outside of every scooter, on the outside of an air conditioner," he said. "My hope would be, if we do it correctly, that the brand becomes one that represents power and torque but also a conscientious consumer."

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